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FRIDAY
APRIL 23, 1954

I went to a meeting at the residence at 9:15 this morning. There was little optimism expressed by those present, either on EDC or Indo-China. Bowie advocated that, in view of the lack of reliability of the French Government, three things be done:

(1) The NATO Council relieve Marshal Juin of his command.

(2) Messrs. Coty, Laniel, and Bidault be informed by the Secretary that, if the EDC were not ratified by the National Assembly within the next month or so, the U. S. intends to propose relieving the Germans of occupation by the Allied powers and putting into effect the contractals. We would also arrange, as provided in the treaty, for a meeting between the powers who have already ratified EDC, attended by U. S. and U. K. representatives, to decide what should be done about EDC or, alternatively, have a special meeting of the NATO Council, attended by Foreign Ministers and Defense Ministers, to review the present NATO strategic plan.

(3) We inform the French that, if they agree to a cease fire without our consent, we would discontinue all military and financial aid to them for their Indo-China activities.

These three proposals met with a varying reception, and the Secretary was left to cogitate over them at some future time.

Our meeting broke up to allow Dulles and his immediate advisers to leave for the Palais de Chaillot, where proceedings were to commence at 10:30.

I came down to the office with Ridgway. Van Helmont had seen Mollet last night and he gave me a paper on Mollet's demand for action by the French Government.

This is our wedding anniversary, and E. presented me a tray, designed by herself, with ingenious and beautiful trompe-l'oeil decoration.

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Guy Mollet came unexpectedly to my office this afternoon. He said he had been in Arras on the day the so-called communiqué regarding democratic control was issued. Schumann told him on the telephone the language contained in it would be fully satisfactory to him but did not read the text. When Mollet finally saw it he was completely dissatisfied and, therefore, did not bring the matter squarely before his Executive Committee, hoping the situation would evolve later on in a more favorable manner. He said there was no question he had thus far been double-crossed in connection with the agreement the French Government asserts it had made with him. Laniel had told Dillon yesterday he would see Mollet and try to straighten the affair out. Mollet said he has not yet received any communication from Laniel.

Ham Armstrong called on me. He has just arrived from Italy. He thinks the British and ourselves made a terrible diplomatic mess in our attempt to settle the Trieste problem.

I went to a dinner given by the Bidaults for the NATO representatives. I had a depressing conversation with René Pleven, who confirmed the gloomy statements on the Indo-China war conveyed to the Secretary yesterday and today. He sees little hope of Dien Bien Phu being able to hold out. Laniel had mentioned this same subject to Doug MacArthur at lunchtime. MacArthur's memorandum of conversation is ~~very~~ interesting. Laniel thinks if Dien Bien Phu falls, the public reaction in France would make imperative an agreement with the Communists at Geneva -- even an unfavorable one -- on Indo-China. Also, such a defeat would have a profound effect on EDC, probably destroying the possibility of favorable French action.

I had a short talk with Bidault, who looked ~~very~~ ill and is obviously strained physically and emotionally.

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Spaak had arrived this afternoon and seemed in fine fettle.

Dr. Bech was, as usual, buoyant, but has no confidence in the French Government.

The telegram I wrote last night was sent off today with comparatively few changes as a joint communication from Dillon and myself in the following terms:

"SENT: Secstate Washington. NIACT. 4028. R

"FOR THE ACTING SECRETARY. LIMIT DISTRIBUTION.

"Joint Emb Bruce Mission message.

"The problem of the Socialist Party's condition for democratic control of the European Army seems presently complicated by misunderstandings. Maurice Schumann is reported to have said that Mollet had confessed to a defeat at the hands of his own executive committee on Wednesday night. Bidault is reported to have felt that the Socialists had failed him in the understanding he thought he had reached with them, and to have said that, lacking Socialist support, the only alternative would seem to be the so-called 'short treaty' which in effect would be a fundamental concession to right-wing anti-EDC elements in the French Govt, and would require a re-negotiation of the question of a German military contribution. Such action at its best would be time-consuming and there is no assurance that it would be acceptable to the four nations which have already ratified EDC, and are now openly suspicious of the French Govt's sincerity in regard to the implementation of the North Atlantic Organization's military strategic plan.

"A conversation with Mollet yesterday indicates that as far as he is concerned he feels that the public manifestation of the assurances given him by Bidault, presumably speaking on behalf of the Fr Govt, has been inadequate and ambiguous. The one sentence so-called communiqué, which as Mollet terms it, was not a communiqué", very obviously bound the Govt in no substantial degree. Mollet has

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had his Directing Committee give him permission to convoke it as soon as an official response is received by the Socialist Party to its demand for its formula regarding democratic control over the European Army. (See Embtel 4026 for further explanation of Socialist situation.)

"Under the circumstances, it appears that either Messrs. Laniel, Bidault or Mollet, or all of them, have been lacking in candor with us.

"There is nothing in this complication which is irremediable. If the French Govt would immediately issue an endorsement of Mollet's demand, coupled with an announcement that it was referring the matter, under its sponsorship, to the other five participating nations, the way would be cleared for Mollet to schedule his party congress.

"Perhaps Mr. Spaak, who will arrive in Paris this afternoon, can be usefully employed as a stalking horse in this affair. There is reason to believe he will not be coy in trying to effect an accommodation that will not reflect discredit on the pretensions to integrity of the respective potential partners to this combination.

"But if this intermediate obstacle to an EDC ratification debate in France is hurdled there will still remain the formidable obstruction of agreement on the Saar. Maurice Schumann's recent assurances to Dillon are more constructive than any of his preceding ones, but we will have to await a further meeting between Schumann and Hallstein before we can make any reliable assessment of this situation. A discreet intervention by the U.S. and U.K. in this complicated imbroglio may soon be timely, since both nations have, because of the demand for their guarantees, a distinct interest in a settlement at once fair and decisive. Without questioning the good faith of the French Government, we must recognize the fact that a postponement or even procrastination over this issue can easily make impossible the fixing of ~~an~~ an early definite date for EDC debate.

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"Above and beyond these matters of detail, the U.S. should be unceasingly aware that nothing in the conduct of French Governments over the two year period since the EDC Treaty was initialled should lead even the most trusting of friendly nations to believe in their protestations. An undertaking by Laniel's Cabinet to ask the Steering Committee on May 18 to fix a date for debate - presumably on May 25 - is sound and fury unless that Cabinet, and particularly the Prime Minister, will, after showing a reasonable and honorable spirit of cooperation on the Saar and democratic control issues, be ready to employ all the powers of government to bring about the desired result.

"The debate in the Steering Committee will be in effect the first action of the National Assembly itself, as distinct from the Government, on the EDC. Full governmental support will be required for a favorable result including the willingness to pose question of confidence on setting date for debate. Bidault has told Dillon this will be done, but we have no governmental commitment on this point.

"The U.S. and U.K. have deeply engaged themselves in this venture, so promising for the future of Europe and of peace. To falter now, to turn back when we have neared the end of the furrow, would be politically stupid and morally indefensible. It is true that few factors of influence remain to us. With Anglo-Saxon generosity, and perhaps what might be viewed as credulity, we have more ardently espoused the cause of European integration than its formal originators, the French. However, the U.S. and U.K. owe a duty not only to themselves but to their global responsibilities to make a realistic attempt to bring this wayward, unreflecting, illogical neighbor to a sense of his own responsibilities if he expects to share with them the prestige as well as the burden of leadership of the free world.

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"The great issue in Europe is not German rearmament, important as that is. It is whether or not Federal Germany (and eventually the whole of that divided country) shall be oriented to the West or to the East. Its balance in the scales may well be decisive in determining whether peace will prevail or aggression will pay.

"It is, therefore, suggested that the Federal Republic of Germany, if admitted by France to a respectable association through the EDC with its fellow nations of the free world, should, upon the initiative of the U.S. and Great Britain, be accorded the right to separate the Contractual Agreements from the EDC Treaty, and enjoy that measure of sovereignty provided for it under the provisions of the treaty of Bonn. The French Government should be advised at once that if it is unable or undesirous of precipitating a debate on EDC, the U.S. and U.K. expect publicly to suggest the implementation of the Bonn treaty, regardless of EDC.
DILLON."

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